

PAC GENERAL MEETING
February 18, 2009

PAC Executive in Attendance: Rhylin Bailie, Anne Deliyannides, Pia Gant, Keith Chong, Shannon Kaustinen, Denise Hayhurst, Jane Andrew, Zena Kwan, Anita Gartner

Regrets: Jen Mezei

Meeting Commenced 7:05pm

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

- Denise 1st, Pia 2nd

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Snow Blower

- Rishma is still looking into purchasing a snow blower for Seaforth School.

Saleema Noon

- Sexual health educator, Saleema Noon, will be at Seaforth on March 26 and 27 to provide two days of sexual health workshops to the students.
- In advance of the student presentations, Ms. Noon will speak to parents from 6:30–8:00 pm on March 3 in the school library.
- This session is intended to present a summary of the information provided to the students and offer an opportunity for parents to ask questions about the student workshops and how to continue the sexual health discussion with their children at home.

Sun Run Team

- So far only 4 or 5 people are interested in having a Sun Run Team through Seaforth School – to make up a team Seaforth will need at least 20 participants.

Signatories

- Two new signatories will be added to the PAC account.
 - Anita Gartner (Vice President) and Anne Deliyannides (Secretary) will be added this week going forward along with the existing PAC Members who are Rhylin Bailie (Chairperson) and Shannon Kaustinen (Treasurer).
- The district has changed their policy and Keith needs to be taken off of the account.

FSA TESTING – JENNIE BOULANGER

- Jennie asked to attend the February General PAC Meeting to talk about the government's perspective and her perspective regarding FSA Testing.
- Students from grades 4 to 7 are tested.
- FSA will be administered from February 2nd to 27th, 2009.
- For the last two years FSA testing has been done in February – prior to this FSA testing was done in May.
- FSAs aren't marked by the teachers that administer the test.
- FSA scores do not count towards student report card marks but are instead meant to compliment other grading measurements.

- Ministry's position is that every student should have an assessment done so that every parent will know how their child/children are doing in school.
- This needs to be refined as FSA testing is not showing full picture of what the students are doing in Grade 4 and Grade 7.
- Teachers use varied, frequent and alternate ways to assess students, i.e.:
 - Work samples
 - Observations/evidence
 - Interviews/conferences
 - Peer/self evaluations
 - Tests/quizzes
 - Projects
 - Alternate ways to show learning such as:
 - Oral,
 - Visual arts,
 - Music,
 - Tech/computer graphic organizers,
 - Written
- Teachers try to use the same standard reading assessments which can be broken down into three different areas, i.e.:
 - Summarizing
 - Connecting
 - Vocabulary
- These assessments look at how the students are doing and how the teachers can meet the needs of those students.
- One of the concerns with regard to FSA testing is that they're multiple choice. So for example if we are assessing math skills, we cannot tell how the student came up with his/her answers. It's possible that the student understood the question and did everything right but just chose the wrong multiple choice box, and the student therefore gets 0.
- Perhaps a more feasible scoring scale would be if a student:
 - Did no work - 0 points
 - A few calculations - 1 or 2 points
 - Did the right steps but didn't get the correct answer - 3 or 4 points
 - If gets correct answer and goes through the proper process - 5 points
- It is more important for the student to understand the concept of a question than to get the question right.
- Teachers are trying to teach the students to be thinkers not just to memorize facts.
- Teachers believe that the best assessment for learning takes place in a classroom context with assessment tools that match the curriculum that has been taught.
- An assessment that provides descriptive feedback is more effective than an assessment that provides evaluative feedback, such as a mark. Descriptive feedback focuses on:
 - What students have or have not achieved, including improvements to earlier work
 - Explanations to a student that they are right or wrong and why
 - Specific ways in which the work could be improved
 - Inviting the student to suggest ways they can improve
- One of the disadvantages of FSA type of tests is that you can't get a clear vision of what the student is thinking.

- Similar to the 2008 FSA, content of the 2009 FSA has been developed to reflect a February administering timeframe. In Reading and Writing, the materials and the questions were selected for a mid-year profile. The grade 4 Numeracy will continue to assess learning outcomes from K-4; the Grade 7 Numeracy will continue to address learning outcomes from Grade 7 and from previous years. Generally, if a concept has been introduced in Grades 2/3 or 5/6 and is expanded upon in Grades 4 or 7, the concept is considered to be valid for inclusion on the 2009 assessment.
- The Fraser Institute is able to extract student testing data and produce new sets of statistics for the public, and influence public discussion. This pushed the Ministry to begin displaying school-by-school data on its website.
- It has always been stressed that student test results represent only one source of data that should be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of a school and that the BC school accreditation process, which considers a broad array of information provides the proper forum to determine school strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, that program, whose roots go back to 1935, was dropped in 2002 (?) and replaced by school district accountability contracts. While those contracts may be useful to district and ministry administrators, parents and the public have little connection with school district offices.
- Fraser Institute should take into account student diversity, i.e.:
 - Financial differences
 - Experiential differences
 - Language barriers (ESL)
 - Learning challenges
 - Different styles of communicating and learning
 - Students' varied rates of development.
- FSA results compare last year's Grade 4s to this year's Grade 4s rather than longitudinal studies. It's not the same group of students, so it's really not a fair comparison.
- Jennie is not against assessment/testing, just need to be clear about:
 - what we want the data for ... THE PURPOSE,
 - and whether the information/data we are collecting matches the purpose
- Students in Grade 4 can be taught how to answer multiple choice exams, but is that really a life skill?
- Teachers feel a lot of pressure to teach content rather than problem solving.
- FSA testing has been around for 8 years and has been an issue for teachers right from the beginning.
 - When the teachers first heard about FSA testing they did complain but didn't want to make a big deal about it.
 - Teachers tried to talk to the Ministry of Education regarding their concerns about FSA testing
- Need to find better ways to assess students/teachers/schools.
 - Perhaps the government could do random samplings while not identifying certain schools. This could be done across the province or in certain areas.
- Nothing is done about the data that they collect and publish from FSA tests.
- FSA testing takes 8 to 10 hours every year.
- Teachers are concerned that FSAs:
 - Take time away from teaching and learning
 - Are misused to rank schools

- Take much-needed resources away from classrooms and schools

FSA TESTING – KEITH CHONG

- Most people are concerned about the political element to FSA testing.
- The purpose of FSA testing is varied and you can manipulate statistics to prove any point you would like.
- While a number of variables are involved in the data collected from FSA testing, most people are too busy to find out the details, and are more focused on what is the bottom line, i.e. how well a certain school is ranked by the Fraser Institute. Whether the data is accurate or not is debatable.
- FSA testing evaluates the school not the individual students.
- On a personal level it is human nature to want to say that the school that your child attends is ranked high on the Fraser Institute.
- If a school does well then there is very little discussion but if a school is on a decline then a discussion will ensue to find out why.
- Do not take a lot of stock in FSAs – teachers at Seaforth teach to the curriculum, the students are not prepped for the FSAs.
- Almost all students at Seaforth participate in writing the FSAs, whereas at other schools they do not test students that they think will perform poorly and therefore decrease their scores.
- The only students that would not write FSAs at Seaforth are those students that are:
 - ESL level one or two
 - Have a ministry designation, i.e. autism.
- Some school districts sent a letter home to parents to ask for their child/children to be excused from taking the FSA test.
- FSA results do not affect school funding (at least not directly).
- Biggest concern for parents of Seaforth students should be if the school is meeting the needs of your child, i.e.
 - If your child has certain learning disabilities
 - If your child is gifted
 - If your child learns in different ways, etc.
- Most parents would agree that Seaforth is doing a remarkable job in meeting the students' needs, which is why there is such a long waitlist to get into Seaforth.
- There is a miscommunication as to what these FSA results tell us.
- Students get very nervous about writing the FSAs.
- Within a month parents receive the results of the FSA testing in the mail.
- Report card marks are far more accurate than FSA results.
- Seaforth was ranked considerably lower than in previous years – they are now ranked at the 7.6 level.

TREASURY REPORT

- Cash Position:

○ General Operating Account	\$29,001.50	(previously reported \$16,537.43)
○ Gaming Account	<u>\$12,679.10</u>	(previously reported \$12,846.67)
○ <i>TOTAL CASH POSITION</i>	<u>\$41,680.60</u>	
- Update on January/February activities:

- Hot Lunch proceeds for the second half of the year was \$15,480.67 – total proceeds today are \$29,791.92 (there are ~ 842 cheques; average cheque is \$35.38). Hot Lunch continues to be a successful program netting ~ \$10,000 to ~ \$15,000 per year for PAC run programs.
- PAC is expecting a surplus in the Gaming account and we will be working with the School to determine the best use of those proceeds (see attached). Because these funds come from the government there are specific guidelines that govern “how” these proceeds are spent.
- With the up-coming Parents’ Social, PAC is exploring options for setting up a VISA / MC account. And possibly using VISA / MC to pay for other PAC activities (Hot Lunch, certain Carnival activities, etc.)

SPIRIT DAY

- Spirit Day will be held on April 24th.
- Seaforth is planning three one-hour slots during the day.
- Each time slot will have up to 45 workshops/sessions designed for primary, intermediate or K-7 audiences.
- A program of speakers will be available by the end of March.
- Students will pre-select their workshops and confirmation of these workshops will be known by April 10th.
- Some topics include:
 - Martial arts,
 - Bike safety,
 - Theatre sports, etc.
- If you would like to be a presenter or co-present with someone please let Keith Chong know by March 13, 2009.

PARENTS’ SOCIAL

- The Parents’ Social is scheduled for June 5th.
- A theme has not been finalized for the Parents’ Social yet.
- A lot of members could not make the last Parent’s Social Meeting – but they are having another meeting on March 2nd.
- There will be an/a:
 - Entertainer,
 - Games, etc.

CPF

- CPF had a district wide speaker and book swap on February 3rd from 6pm to 7:30pm – was very successful.
- There is a public speaking contest end of March/beginning of April.

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

- As Pia’s children will no longer be attending Seaforth School in September a new Traffic and Safety coordinator will be needed at that time.
 - September will be a bit busy for the coordinator.
 - Every month there is at the most about two hours of work.

- During Traffic Safety Week and Walk to School Day – there will be a bit more work to be done.
- In February a new Traffic and Safety schedule came out – this is for the months of February through to June.
- BCAA will no longer be hosting an event at Bonsor for the Traffic and Safety volunteers and have donated \$200 so that Seaforth can plan their own event.

EARTHQUAKE COMMITTEE

- There will be an Earthquake Committee Meeting next week.
- Will be finalizing the items to be purchased for the Earthquake container.
- Earthquake committee is in the process of developing a neighbourhood plan.
- The plan focuses on what happens 2 to 3 hours after a major event.

DPAC

- Still looking for another representative from Seaforth for DPAC.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- There are several upcoming community events, information will be posted on the PAC Bulletin Board.

PAC DONATIONS

- Seaforth has generated more PAC funds from the letter that was recently sent out to Seaforth parents soliciting donations.

Meeting Adjourned 8:36pm.